vails. I want the Minister kindly to look into it and give me an answer and see that in future such things do not happen.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned till 2.30 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at twenty-nine minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty-two minutes past two of the clock, **Mr. Deputy Chairman** in the Chair.

THE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1986

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIS (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

THE MINES AND MINERALS (REGULATION AND DEVELOPMENT) AMENDMENT BILL, 1986

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): Sir, I beg to move:

> "That the Bill further to amend the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, be taken into consideration."

The Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development Act, 1957 provides for the regulation and development of mines. The Act was last amended in 1972. Since then rapid strides have been made in the production and development of metallic and non-metallic minerals.

As the hon. Members are aware minerals provide the base for the stable and self-sustaining economic development of the country. Our country is fortunate in having large reserves of such important minerals like coal, iron-ore, bauxite, manganese-ore, lime-stone and many other minerals which are raw materials for basic metallurgical industries. As a result of the efforts made, new deposits have been discovered which have added to the mineral reserve.

In the process of mineral development over the past decade and a half, the Act has come in for much closer scrutiny. Suggestions have been received from time to time in various forums like the Mineral Advisory Council for amendment of the Act to bring it in tune with the changing socio-economic conditions of the country. Consultations have been held with the State Governments and their views have been given due consideration before giving the final shape to the proposed amendments.

The Amending Bill provides for simplification of the process of grant of prospecting licences and mining leases greater emphasis on scientific development, and operation of mines including due emphasis on prevention of degradation of the environment. In the very nature of things mining generally leads to the disturbance of the land surface, deforestation, and occasionally, water pollution. The existing laws which lay emphases on scientific mining do not provide as such for protection of the environment. This Bill seeks to remove that lacuna. Clause 3 of the Bill provides for premature termination of Prospecting Licence or Mining Lease if it is felt necessary in the interest of preserving the environment. Premature termination of a prospecting licence or a mining lease would also be attracted in case of failure to main tain safety in mines control of floods, prevention of pollution etc.

Minerals form a wasting asset. It is therefore, necessary to provide for their extraction in a scientific manner which will ensure their optimal recovery and prevention of wastage during the process of mining. This is sought to be achieved through this Bill by providing for the preparation